Plan Summary

The 1992 Operating Plan is based on completing the tasks on the critical path from here to achievement of operational objectives, that is, the actions without which Point will not improve its financial position or increase the impact of WER on society. Other tasks will receive lower priority until we have the resources to address them. The three key components of the Plan are:

1- to have an operation which can implement plans successfully, i.e., in which how it should operate and individual responsibilities are clearly defined, and in which people are capable of (and trained as necessary) doing what's needed;

2- to have a Board of Directors which can play a key role, through its expertise and access to funds and resources, in helping the organization achieve its objectives; and

3- to develop and test a direct mail marketing plan (DM Test) and show results sufficiently promising to justify a roll out (DM Roll Out) of a considerable direct mail campaign over several years.

In summary, the strategy to grow through direct mail will not work if the organization as an entity does not function properly, if the Board is not able to provide help where Staff resources fall short, or if the DM Test is poorly executed or response rates are insufficient for roll out.

Components of the Operating Plan

The three components above are detailed here.

1- Create an organization that functions well.

A.- Establish systems which define how the operation works and define the jobs of the Staff positions.

B.- Provide training for positions which are key to critical path items. This will be the Executive Director, Business Manager, Managing Editor, Editor (new hire), and Circulation Director (see part 3 below).

C.- Hire a new Editor, after designing the Editor's job and those jobs which interact with it.

D.- Define the accounting/numerical feedback/analysis system and staff it sufficiently. (This is a subset of Part 1-A but is singled out because of its importance to financial control and because a new staffing arrangement will be needed.)

People in key positions at Point lack necessary experience for performing their new tasks (i.e., establishing systems and defining jobs, and planning and executing certain aspects of direct mail), and there is insufficient knowledge within the organization to train them. (As far as I have determined, no one on the Staff has been an employee at another magazine.) Further, Staff will be asked to operate in an environment of greater accountability. The people in these positions bring the right attitude but in many cases what they are being asked to accomplish is new to them; hence the need for training and access to expertise if organizational objectives are to be achieved.

By the end of 1992, Point should no longer accept compromises in structure or in performance, which ripple negatively throughout the organization. Weaknesses in expertise, as well, should have been addressed, so that we will not lack knowledge or access to experience in key areas where we need to perform well.

[Note: A more detailed work plan will be given to each member of the management team--Executive Director, Business Manager, Managing Editor, and Editor--to be used as a basis for setting goals and evaluating results.]

2- Have a Board of Directors which can play a key role in helping the organization achieve its objectives

If Point Foundation is going to perform as well as it needs to at its new tasks, it needs the support of a Board which can complement and help develop the strengths of the staff as well as keep an eye on the big questions and the picture.

The Board sees that a new role for it is necessary, and to that end a Nominating Committee of the Board has been formed to define the attributes of new members needed on the Board and recruit appropriate candidates. The skills and assets of new members should be tied to

Point's upcoming work. The ways in which the Board can be helpful in 1992 are the following:

re: Staff objectives:

- •Reviewing the DM Test plan and helping to raise funds for the test.
- •Providing advice and access to expertise regarding item 1 A--establishing systems, defining jobs and finding appropriate training/expertise.
- •Helping the Staff deal with chronic shortage of resources.

re: Board objectives:

- •Monitoring the outside world and maintaining a dialog about Point's direction and role in society.
- •Providing expertise to help in managing Point's large investment in the WELL.
- •Monitoring the management of Point.
- •Attending to Board "housekeeping" matters--leadership of the Board; on-going regeneration of the Board; defining the roles and responsibilities of Board members.

The schedule is to add one or two new members at the February/March meeting and another by late April. Some of the current members may leave the Board, which would make room for more new members later. By mid or late Spring, the Board should hold a working session to assess how it can be most effective.

<u>3- Develop and test a direct mail marketing plan and show results sufficiently promising to justify a roll out</u>

[Note: a more detailed description of the elements required in a DM Test, e.g. plan strategy, tactics, proof, funding, returns, etc., will be given to the Circulation Director.]

The key steps here are:
A- Develop DM test plan, with review by several experts.
B- Raise funding for the DM test (roughly $25,000 to $50,000, with a possible loss to be incurred).
C- Develop a DM Roll Out plan, projecting results out several years, to show that the DM strategy can lead to achieving organizational goals.
D- As necessary to achieve sufficient results, provide training to Circulation Director where required to implement successfully.

Items which are desirable but not on critical path in 1992

Moving production to DTP methods
Increasing fund raising from subscribers
Selecting a new printing contractor
Doing books
Developing a strong promotional capability
Increasing frequency to increase renewal rates
Developing new projects
Rationalizing the library

The Future

If we perform successfully in 1992, then in 1993 we should have an organization which is able to plan and execute well, and to do so without risking the health of WER, which has been a chronic problem in the past. And we should have more experience in raising funds. Hence, we should be both a better candidate for funding and a better fund raiser. The focus can shift from strengthening the magazine organization to maintenance of a working system, and we can pay more attention to bells and whistles for the magazine and to new projects.

[Note: A budget and a calendar, with responsibilities for actions, will be a part of the Operating Plan.]